

**CHANGES TO THE CLAIMS:**

The claims have been amended as follows:

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1. (currently amended) A fuel filter suitable for filtering diesel fuel comprising:

- a filter housing comprising a filter head and a housing enclosure, a fuel inlet and a fuel outlet arranged on the filter housing, and a water accumulation chamber which communicates with a water outlet provided in the housing enclosure,

- a cylindrical filter element installed in the filter housing such that an unfiltered side of the filter which communicates with the fuel inlet is sealingly separated from a filtered side of the filter which communicates with the fuel outlet, wherein the water accumulation chamber is disposed on the unfiltered side of the filter,

- a lower spacer including gaps through which water reach the water accumulation chamber,

- an intermediate metal plate, via which the lower spacer is braced against the housing enclosure,

- a water discharge valve at said water outlet, with an actuator for opening the water discharge valve from outside the filter, and

- wherein said actuator is connected to the filter head on the one hand and the water outlet on the other hand.

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2. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 1, further comprising a water sensor arranged in the filter housing.

3. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 1, wherein said actuator extends through a filter interior formed by the cylindrical filter element.

4. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 1, wherein axial displacement of the actuator opens the water outlet.

5. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 4, wherein the water outlet is opened by pulling on the actuator.

6. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 4, further comprising a drive unit for moving said actuator.

7. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 1, further comprising means for arresting said actuator to prevent unintended opening of the discharge valve.

8. (original) A fuel filter according to claim 2, wherein the water sensor is connected to a control unit, which in turn is connected to a drive unit for said actuator, such that the actuator is actuated and the discharge valve opened automatically to release water from the filter housing when the water sensor senses that a predetermined amount of water has accumulated in the water accumulation chamber.